
Community Development Technical Paper

June 2004

ABOUT THIS TECHNICAL PAPER

The structure of the Community Development Technical Paper is as following:

- A brief description of the key considerations in the area of Community Development in the region;
- The current state and future trends of each of the key considerations in the region; and
- Potential solutions that could be employed to address issues arising out of those trends.

The majority of statistical data contained in this Technical Paper has been accessed from the Office of Economic and Statistical Research from statistics that were available prior to April 2004. It is important to note that the most recent data available is not always the most reliable. For this reason, the statistics included in this report were checked for relevance, quality, reliability and timeliness before they were included.

Following a formal peer review of this paper by Central Queensland University, a number of changes were made to the paper in 2005, in line with comments and suggestions resulting from this process. Not all suggestions were incorporated because it was felt that they had either been covered in other technical papers in the series, or the development of the Burnett Mary NRM planning process had moved on to a point where incorporation of the suggestions would add no further value to the paper.

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Guiding Principle and Background

Guiding Principle

The social and cultural fabric and vitality of the community should be underpinned by sound, ethically based planning, institutional support and investment that recognises the past, embraces the present and prepares for the future.

Background

Changing Demographics

The region's estimated resident population at the 2001 Census was 257 204 persons, or 7.1 percent of the total number of persons (3 635 121) estimated to reside in Queensland at that date (*OESR QRBIS Database, 2004*). Growth in the region varies considerably, with coastal areas generally experiencing growth while many rural areas are experiencing static or declining populations.

Provision of Community Services

Community services in the region are centred around the coastal areas and cities. Rural communities depend heavily on remote services. Health, welfare and education are the core services with growing demands for recreational and leisure services.

Changing Demographics

Current State

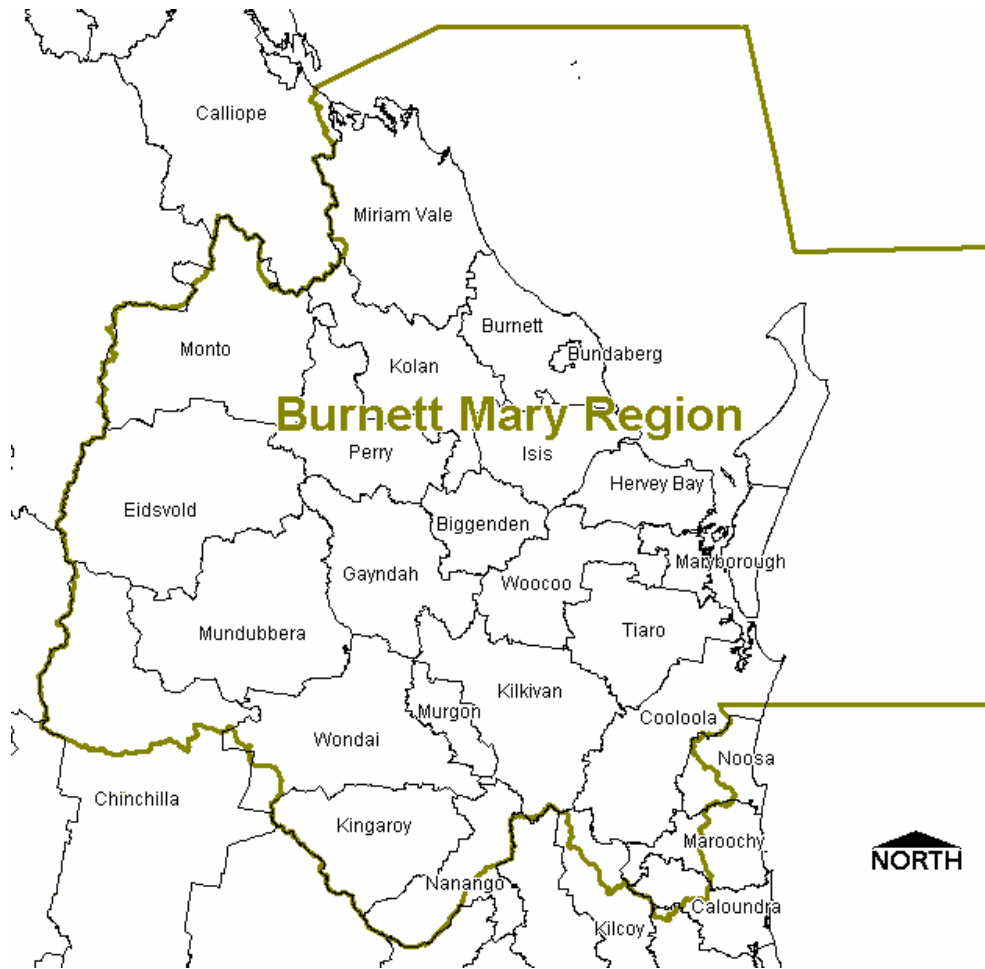
Population Trends

The Burnett Mary region is an area comprising all or part of 26 local government areas (plus the Cherbourg Aboriginal Council, which is within the Murgon Shire) with a total area of 56,964 square kilometres which is 3.29% of the total area of the State (**Map 1**). The region's estimated resident population at the 2001 Census was 257 204 persons, or 7.1% of the total number of persons (3 635 121) estimated to reside in Queensland at that date (*OESR, QRBIS, 2004*). Due to the problem of calculating figures for parts of statistical local areas, most statistics will be based on those available for the Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division, unless otherwise indicated.

A dominant feature of the Burnett Mary region is the dispersed population, with none of the major centres having primacy. At June 2001, Bundaberg City comprised 17.3% (44 670 persons) of the region's population, Hervey Bay City having 16.4% (42 436 persons), Cooloola Shire 13.1% (33 760 persons), Burnett Shire 9.3% (23 891 persons) and a further 4.6% (11 835 persons) was recorded in Kingaroy Shire (*OESR, Regional Profile: Wide Bay Burnett*). Those areas of the Sunshine Coast hinterland included in the Burnett Mary region, which are not part of the Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division (parts of Noosa, Maroochy, Caloundra and Kilcoy Shires), comprise 8.5% (22 006 persons) of the region's population.

Population growth varies greatly across the region. During the period 1996-2001 the most dramatic growth was recorded in those parts of Maroochy Shire (4.0%) and Noosa Shires (3.2%) in the Burnett Mary region. Significant growth was also recorded in Burnett, Perry and Miriam Vale Shires and Hervey Bay City, which all had average annual growth rates above 2.0%. The population decreased in Biggenden, Chinchilla, Eidsvold, Kilkivan, Monto and Mundubbera Shires. (**Table 1.1**).

The Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division recorded an annual population growth rate of 1.1 % for the five years between June 1996 and June 2001 and 1.4 % between June 2000 and June 2001 compared to Queensland's 1.7 % (2000-2001).



Map 1. Burnett Mary Region

Table 1.1 Area and Estimated Population by Local Government Area – 1996 & 2001.

| Local Government | Area km ² | Population 1996 | Population 2001 | Average Annual Growth Rate % |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Biggenden Shire | 1,315 | 1,638 | 1528 | -1.0 |
| Bundaberg City | 95 | 43,562 | 44,670 | 0.4 |
| Burnett Shire | 2,001 | 20,952 | 23,891 | 2.7 |
| Calliope Shire (pt) | 83 | 1,293 | 1,479 | 2.6 |
| Caloundra City (pt) | 402 | 5,351 | 6514 | 2.0 |
| Chinchilla Shire (pt) | 2,942 | 117 | 121 | -2.2 |
| Cooloola Shire | 2,968 | 32,071 | 33,670 | 1.0 |
| Eidsvold Shire | 4,809 | 965 | 946 | -0.5 |
| Gayndah Shire | 2,707 | 2,873 | 2,890 | 0.1 |
| Hervey Bay City | 2,393 | 38,809 | 42,436 | 2.2 |
| Isis Shire | 1,708 | 5,795 | 5,882 | 0.2 |
| Kilcoy Shire (pt) | 631 | 128 | 132 | 0.7 |
| Kilkivan Shire | 3,262 | 3,232 | 3,226 | -0.1 |
| Kingaroy Shire | 2,420 | 11,444 | 11,835 | 0.6 |
| Kolan Shire | 2,652 | 4,344 | 4,640 | 1.4 |
| Maroochy Shire (pt) | 463 | 4,492 | 5,157 | 4.0 |
| Maryborough City | 1,237 | 24,841 | 25,145 | 0.2 |
| Miriam Vale Shire | 3,870 | 3,975 | 4,481 | 2.4 |
| Monto Shire | 4,323 | 2,924 | 2,534 | -2.7 |
| Mundubbera Shire | 4,194 | 2,433 | 2,293 | -1.1 |
| Murgon Shire | 695 | 4,630 | 4,830 | 0.9 |
| Nanango Shire (pt) | 1,416 | 5,983 | 6,324 | 1.2 |
| Noosa Shire (pt) | 328 | 8,627 | 10,203 | 3.2 |
| Perry Shire | 2,358 | 371 | 424 | 2.6 |
| Tiaro Shire | 2,193 | 4,318 | 4,693 | 1.6 |
| Wondai Shire | 3,580 | 4,107 | 4,210 | 0.6 |
| Woocoo Shire | 2,006 | 2,916 | 3,050 | 0.9 |

**Murgon statistics includes data for Cherbourg*

(Source: OESR, QRBIS Estimated Residential Population; DLGP, Recent Population and Housing Trends in Queensland 2003)

The population of the Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division is projected to increase to 260,547 by 2006, 307,643 by 2016 and 355,936 by 2026 (*Source: DLGP, Queensland's Future Population - 2003 Edition*). Each projection indicates that the population of the region will increase as a proportion of the State's total population. Significant growth is predicted in several areas throughout the region, principally in those parts of the Sunshine Coast hinterland within the Burnett Mary Region; and the local government areas of Miriam Vale Shire, Hervey Bay City, Burnett Shire and Tiaro Shire within the Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division. **Table 1.2** shows the population projections for each of the Shires in the Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division.

The implications of a growing population include:

- Increasing demand for basic infrastructure such as electricity, gas, water, sewerage and roads;
- Increasing demand for other infrastructure and services such as schools, hospitals, police, fire and ambulance stations, community centres,

sporting and recreational facilities, as well as commercial, industrial, and entertainment infrastructure;

- Consumption of land previously used for other purposes, including those uses above, and land to supply food and dispose of wastes.

Recent anecdotal evidence suggests that some of the inland Burnett local government areas have experienced in-migration in recent times due to a combination of major infrastructure projects such as the Burnett River Dam¹, and the impact of rising property prices in coastal areas. While in overall numbers this may be considered minimal from a regional perspective, even relatively small population increases can put a strain on the ability of small local councils to provide adequate services and infrastructure.

Table 1.2 Population Projections for 2006, 2016 and 2026.

| Projected Population | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Local Government | 2001 | 2006(p) | 2016(p) | 2026(p) | Av. Annual Growth Rate % |
| Biggenden (S) | 1,554 | 1,524 | 1,464 | 1,387 | -0.5 |
| Bundaberg (C) | 44,551 | 48,457 | 54,039 | 58,977 | 1.1 |
| Burnett (S) | 23,891 | 28,988 | 38,306 | 48,018 | 2.8 |
| Coolooloa (S) | 33,651 | 35,809 | 41,934 | 47,745 | 1.4 |
| Eidsvold (S) | 941 | 931 | 913 | 896 | -0.2 |
| Gayndah (S) | 2,888 | 2,862 | 2,844 | 2,825 | -0.1 |
| Hervey Bay (C) | 43,298 | 52,619 | 68,223 | 85,447 | 2.8 |
| Isis (S) | 5,849 | 6,071 | 6,774 | 7,487 | 1.0 |
| Kilkivan (S) | 3,222 | 3,279 | 3,435 | 3,648 | 0.5 |
| Kingaroy (S) | 11,808 | 12,757 | 13,562 | 14,131 | 0.7 |
| Kolan (S) | 4,652 | 5,047 | 6,634 | 8,342 | 2.4 |
| Maryborough (C) | 25,125 | 25,940 | 27,306 | 28,318 | 0.5 |
| Miriam Vale (S) | 4,484 | 5,367 | 7,620 | 10,107 | 3.3 |
| Monto (S) | 2,552 | 2,306 | 1,947 | 1,686 | -1.6 |
| Mundubbera (S) | 2,298 | 2,343 | 2,473 | 2,759 | 0.7 |
| Murgon (S) | 3,625 | 3,852 | 4,342 | 4,757 | 1.1 |
| Nanango (S) | 8,529 | 8,930 | 10,088 | 11,160 | 1.1 |
| Perry (S) | 421 | 461 | 492 | 496 | 0.7 |
| Tiaro (S) | 4,672 | 5,472 | 7,189 | 9,032 | 2.7 |
| Wondai (S) | 4,229 | 4,268 | 4,288 | 4,289 | 0.1 |
| Woocoo (S) | 3,043 | 3,264 | 3,770 | 4,429 | 1.5 |

(These projections were produced in November 2003 by the Planning Information and Forecasting Unit, Department of Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning).

*Murgon statistics includes data for Cherbourg.

¹ The Burnett River Dam and other water infrastructure projects are major employment generators that have resulted in an influx of construction workers to nearby shires.

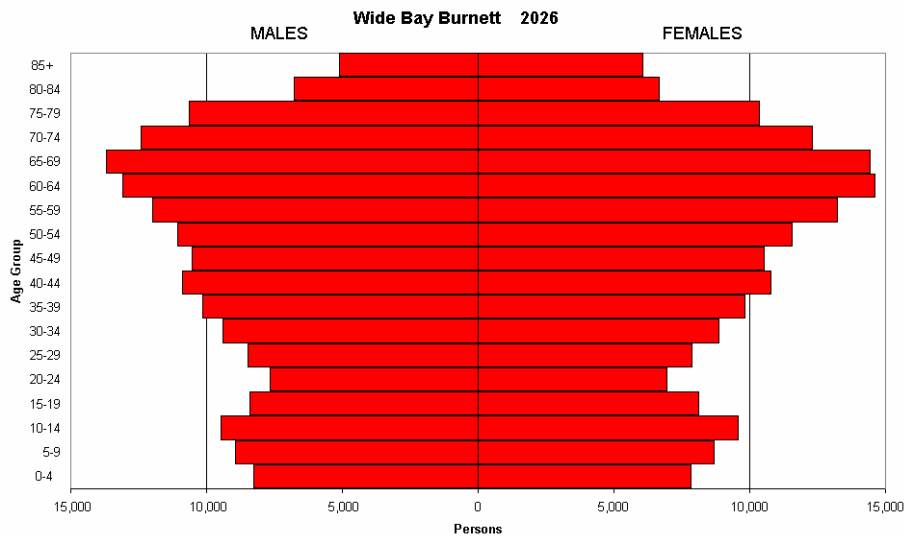


Figure 1.2 Age/Sex Pyramid – Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division 2026
(Source: DLGP, Queensland's Future Population - 2003 Edition)

By 2026, the dominant feature is the high proportion of the population in the 55+ age categories, creating a rising demand for aged care services.

Household and Family Type

In the Wide Bay Burnett region the proportion of persons in families comprising ‘a couple with children’ comprised 42 percent, compared with the Queensland proportion of 44.9 percent. Within the region the proportion of persons in families (a couple with children) in 2001 was high in the shires of Murgon (55.6 percent), Woocoo (54.6 percent) and Burnett (47.6 percent). Figures were low in Hervey Bay City (36.6 percent), Maryborough City and Biggenden Shire (both 40.9 percent) (OESR, Datahub). The proportion of persons in the region in families comprising ‘a couple only’ was 23.3 percent in 2001, compared to 19.0 percent for Queensland as a whole. (OESR, Datahub).

At 11.3 percent, the proportion of persons in the region in ‘one-parent families’ was marginally higher than the State average (11.0 percent). However, within the region, Murgon Shire (23.2 percent) was significantly above the next highest (Bundaberg City – 13.5 percent). Woocoo Shire recorded the lowest figure of lone parent households in the Region at 6.6 percent (OESR, Datahub).

Building Approvals

Based on data for the year ending December 2003, the Wide Bay Burnett region accounted for 7.2 percent (3,042) of Queensland’s new residential dwelling approvals.

Within the region, Hervey Bay City accounted for 42.1 percent (1,281 dwelling units) of the total number of dwelling units approved within the region. With reference to non-residential building approvals, 20.1 percent (\$16.5 million) of the value of the region’s approvals was recorded in Bundaberg City, 19.9 percent (\$15.8 million) in Hervey Bay City, and 19.5 percent (\$15.4 million) in Cooloola Shire. The total value of all buildings approved in the region in 2003

was \$507.8 million, 4.7 percent of the overall total for the State (*OESR, DataHub*).

Dwelling Structure

Table 2.3 shows that 103,307 private dwellings were counted in the Wide Bay Burnett region at the 2001 census. 77,483 (75.0 percent) were separate houses, and 7,860 (7.6 percent) were semi-detached dwellings or flats. A further 5,758 (5.6 percent) private dwellings comprised other dwellings, such as caravans, house boats, improvised homes and dwellings that could not be categorised elsewhere, while the remaining 12,206 (11.8 percent) had dwelling structures that were not stated or were unoccupied (*ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile (BCP) - Second Release*).

Within the region, local government areas with the highest proportions of separate houses were Woocoo Shire (86.0 percent) and Kingaroy Shire (82.9 percent). Miriam Vale Shire (64.6 percent) and Mundubbera Shire (64.7 percent) recorded the lowest proportions of separate houses (**Table 2.3**). In contrast, Woocoo Shire (0.0 percent), Tiaro Shire (0.4 percent) and Monto Shire (0.8 percent) had the lowest proportions of semi-detached dwellings including flats. These figures differ significantly from the State average of 17.3 percent (*ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile (BCP) - Second Release*).

The highest proportions of unoccupied dwellings in 2001 were recorded in Perry Shire (21.1 percent), Biggenden Shire (19.3 percent), and Isis Shire (18.9 percent) (*ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile (BCP) - Second Release*). However, recent anecdotal evidence has suggested that occupancy rates in these three local government areas have recently risen substantially due to works associated with the Burnett River Dam project.

Table 2.3 Private Dwelling Structures by Local Government Area, Wide Bay Burnett Region and Queensland 2001.

| Local Government Area | Separate House (Dwellings) | Total semi detached (Dwellings) | Total flat unit or apartment (Dwellings) | Total other dwelling (Dwellings) | Not stated (Dwellings) | Unoccupied (Dwellings) | Total (Dwellings) |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Biggenden | 551 | 14 | 9 | 34 | 0 | 145 | 753 |
| Bundaberg | 13,757 | 967 | 1,434 | 560 | 93 | 1,113 | 17,924 |
| Burnett | 7,628 | 359 | 267 | 624 | 59 | 1,131 | 10,068 |
| Cooloola | 11,160 | 140 | 675 | 673 | 135 | 1,633 | 14,416 |
| Eidsvold | 309 | 0 | 23 | 31 | 0 | 66 | 429 |
| Gayndah | 983 | 3 | 58 | 113 | 6 | 124 | 1,287 |
| Hervey Bay | 14,293 | 662 | 1,339 | 1,757 | 261 | 2,121 | 20,433 |
| Isis | 1,986 | 37 | 57 | 323 | 57 | 572 | 3,032 |
| Kilkivan | 1,166 | 3 | 29 | 32 | 8 | 230 | 1,468 |
| Kingaroy | 3,827 | 115 | 220 | 86 | 23 | 347 | 4,618 |
| Kolan | 1,516 | 0 | 23 | 159 | 3 | 271 | 1,972 |
| Maryborough | 8,348 | 214 | 874 | 343 | 56 | 1,101 | 10,936 |
| Miriam Vale | 1,554 | 8 | 26 | 367 | 14 | 438 | 2,407 |
| Monto | 976 | 3 | 8 | 82 | 6 | 247 | 1,322 |
| Mundubbera | 761 | 3 | 54 | 185 | 4 | 169 | 1,176 |
| Murgon* | 1,399 | 14 | 50 | 72 | 15 | 182 | 1,732 |
| Nanango | 2,972 | 8 | 125 | 146 | 17 | 608 | 3,876 |
| Perry | 166 | 0 | 4 | 13 | 0 | 49 | 232 |
| Tiaro | 1,638 | 0 | 8 | 74 | 9 | 373 | 2,102 |
| Wondai | 1,471 | 0 | 29 | 68 | 15 | 357 | 1,940 |
| Woocoo | 1,022 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 18 | 128 | 1,188 |
| Wide Bay-Burnett | 77,483 | 2,553 | 5,307 | 5,758 | 801 | 11,405 | 103,307 |
| Queensland | 1,045,137 | 91,979 | 164,424 | 41,828 | 12,245 | 127,299 | 1,482,912 |

*Murgon statistics includes data for Cherbourg

(Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile (BCP) - Second Release)

Housing Tenure

Table 2.4 shows that of the 91,900 occupied dwellings counted in the Wide Bay Burnett region at the 2001 census, 41,677 (45.4 percent) were fully owned, 19,802 (21.5 percent) were being purchased and 22,667 (24.7 percent) were rented. The remainder are occupied under some other form of tenure such as rent-free or a rent/buy scheme. (*OESR, Regional Profile: Wide Bay Burnett June 2002*).

Within the region, the local government areas with the highest proportions of fully owned dwellings were Biggenden Shire (60.7 percent), Perry Shire (58.8 percent) and Monto Shire (58.2 percent). Murgon Shire recorded the lowest proportion (37.8 percent) of fully owned dwellings. Murgon Shire also recorded the highest proportion of dwellings being rented (35.3 percent). Woocoo Shire had the lowest proportion of occupied private dwellings being rented (9.7 percent), and the highest proportion of occupied dwellings being purchased (34 percent) (*OESR, Regional Profile: Wide Bay Burnett June 2002*).

Table 2.4 Housing Tenure by Local Government Area, Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division, 2001.

| Local Government | Fully owned | Being purchased | Rented | Other | Total |
|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Biggenden (S) | 375 | 89 | 98 | 56 | 618 |
| Bundaberg (C) | 6,791 | 3,644 | 5,351 | 1,027 | 16,813 |
| Burnett (S) | 4,232 | 2,332 | 1,657 | 717 | 8,938 |
| Cooloolo (S) | 5,685 | 3,090 | 3,022 | 986 | 12,783 |
| Eidsvold (S) | 175 | 30 | 105 | 50 | 360 |
| Gayndah (S) | 540 | 179 | 305 | 139 | 1,163 |
| Hervey Bay (C) | 8,427 | 3,426 | 4,844 | 1,613 | 18,310 |
| Isis (S) | 1,248 | 452 | 481 | 275 | 2,456 |
| Kilkivan (S) | 629 | 259 | 224 | 125 | 1,237 |
| Kingaroy (S) | 1,771 | 1,040 | 1,133 | 323 | 4,267 |
| Kolan (S) | 824 | 455 | 263 | 160 | 1,702 |
| Maryborough (C) | 4,486 | 2,071 | 2,535 | 742 | 9,834 |
| Miriam Vale (S) | 993 | 346 | 290 | 344 | 1,973 |
| Monto (S) | 626 | 134 | 191 | 125 | 1,076 |
| Mundubbera (S) | 413 | 137 | 309 | 148 | 1,007 |
| Murgon (S)* | 585 | 250 | 546 | 165 | 1,546 |
| Nanango (S) | 1,585 | 727 | 675 | 282 | 3,269 |
| Perry (S) | 107 | 22 | 31 | 22 | 182 |
| Tiaro (S) | 819 | 474 | 245 | 190 | 1,728 |
| Wondai (S) | 813 | 331 | 267 | 173 | 1,584 |
| Woocoo (S) | 553 | 313 | 102 | 85 | 1,053 |
| Wide Bay Burnett | 41,677 | 19,802 | 22,667 | 7,754 | 91,900 |

(OESR Regional Profile Wide Bay Burnett June 2002).

*Murgon statistics includes data for Cherbourg.

Median Weekly Rent

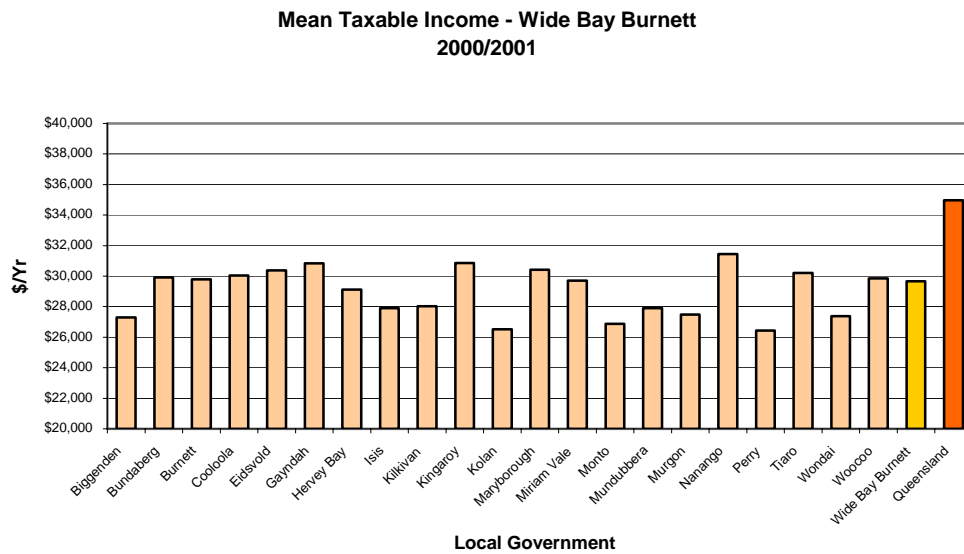
At August 2001, the Wide Bay Burnett region recorded lower median weekly rents (\$118) than the State as a whole (\$152) (*DLGP, 2003*).

Within the region, the local government areas with highest median weekly rent were Hervey Bay City (\$133), Burnett Shire (\$129) and Bundaberg City and Cooloolo Shire (both recording \$120). The local government area recording the lowest median weekly rent was Eidsvold Shire (\$65) (*DLGP, 2003*).

Family Incomes

The median income for families in the Wide Bay Burnett region recorded in the 2001 Census was \$29,659 per annum, compared with a Queensland figure of \$34,977 per annum, see **Figure 2.5** (*OESR, Regional Profile: WideBayBurnett-June2002*).

Figure 2.5 Median Family Income in Wide Bay Burnett Region.



(Source: OESR, Datahub 2004)
*Murgon statistics include data for Cherbourg

Within the region, all local government areas recorded family incomes less than the State average. Families in Nanango Shire recorded the highest median incomes at \$31,450 per annum (89.9 percent of the State figure), while the lowest figure was recorded in Perry Shire (\$26,427 per annum or 75.6 percent of the State figure) (OESR, Datahub 2004).

Cultural and Linguistic

The 2001 Census indicates that the percentage of indigenous residents of the Wide Bay Burnett is consistent with that for Queensland as a whole, at around 3% (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6 Indigenous Population, Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division, 2001.

| Series | Wide Bay-Burnett (No.) | % of Total Population | Queensland (No.) | % of Total Population |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Aboriginal, Persons | 6,267 | 2.65 | 87,322 | 2.39 |
| Torres Strait Islander, Persons | 392 | 0.17 | 16,415 | 0.45 |
| Both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, Persons | 411 | 0.17 | 9,035 | 0.25 |
| Total Indigenous persons, Persons | 7,070 | 2.99 | 112,772 | 3.09 |

(Source: OESR Datahub 2005)

The 2001 Census also showed that approximately 83.5% of the population of the region had been born in Australia, compared with 76.2% percent for Queensland as a whole (OESR, Regional Profile: Wide Bay Burnett June 2002). In the region, persons born in the United Kingdom or Ireland represented the largest group of overseas born (4.5 percent), compared with a State figure of 5.2 percent, see Table 2.7 (OESR, Regional Profile: Wide Bay Burnett June 2002).

Table 2.7 Country of Birth, Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division, 2001.

| Country of Birth | Wide Bay Burnett – No. | % | Queensland – No. | % |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Australia (b) | 197,310 | 83.5 | 2,786,359 | 76.2 |
| Other Oceania and Antarctica | 4,785 | 2.0 | 155,697 | 4.3 |
| United Kingdom and Ireland | 10,602 | 4.5 | 190,894 | 5.2 |
| Rest of North-West Europe | 3,364 | 1.4 | 53,841 | 1.5 |
| Southern and Eastern Europe | 1,779 | 0.8 | 57,930 | 1.6 |
| North Africa and Middle East | 227 | 0.1 | 8,115 | 0.2 |
| South-East Asia | 1,439 | 0.6 | 50,705 | 1.4 |
| North-East Asia | 272 | 0.1 | 34,951 | 1.0 |
| Southern and Central Asia | 305 | 0.1 | 13,395 | 0.4 |
| Americas | 813 | 0.3 | 25,144 | 0.7 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 665 | 0.3 | 23,347 | 0.6 |
| Other (c) | 79 | 0.0 | 2,148 | 0.1 |
| Not stated | 11,800 | 5.0 | 183,112 | 5.0 |
| Overseas visitors | 2,805 | 1.2 | 69,500 | 1.9 |
| Total | 236,245 | 100.0 | 3,655,138 | 100.0 |

(Source: OESR Regional Profile: Wide Bay Burnett June 2002)

Migration

In Queensland, migration is the main reason underpinning major population growth or decline. Current trends reveal that over two thirds of Queensland's population change (68.9 percent) is attributable to population movement. In the Wide Bay Burnett Statistical Division, assumed net migration accounted for 73.6 percent of the population increase for the year ending 30 June 2002 (*DLGP, Recent Population and Housing Trends in Queensland - 2003*).

Education

The 2001 Census showed that 20.5 percent of the Burnett Mary's population had some form of post-school qualification, as compared to 25.2 percent of the State population. However, only 4.8 percent of the region's population had a Bachelor Degree or higher level of qualification, as compared to 8.5 percent of the State's population. (**Table 2.8**).

Table 2.8 Non-school Qualification: Level of Education
Persons aged 15 years and over (excluding overseas visitors) and excluding schooling up to Year 12.

| Region | Burnett Mary Region | | Queensland | |
|---|---------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % |
| Postgraduate Degree | 1,074 | 0.4 | 38,740 | 1.1 |
| Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate | 1,571 | 0.6 | 31,775 | 0.9 |
| Bachelor Degree, Persons | 9,781 | 3.8 | 235,113 | 6.5 |
| Advanced Diploma and Diploma | 8,525 | 3.3 | 156,001 | 4.3 |
| Certificate | 31,805 | 12.4 | 451,525 | 12.4 |
| Not stated | 22,386 | 8.7 | 305,262 | 8.4 |
| Not applicable | 123,683 | 48.1 | 1,604,681 | 44.1 |
| Total | 198,826 | 77.3 | 2,823,097 | 77.7 |

Source: OESR 2004: QRBIS & QRSIS datasets

Provision of Community Services

Current State

The cities of Bundaberg, Gympie, Hervey Bay and Maryborough, and to a lesser extent Kingaroy, are clearly defined dominant centres in the Burnett Mary region. Many services available to the Burnett Mary region, in particular inland Burnett communities, are outreached from these centres.

Each community has an expectation that a range of services should be provided in their own urban centre. Population growth will directly influence the demand for services and the changing community profile will shape the nature of the social, cultural and human services that are required.

There is a high expectation in the community for low cost, high quality service provision. The smaller rural towns in the Burnett Mary region have experienced for some time inadequate service provision, which is reflected by the decline in population growth in some rural communities. Prominent issues identified include social development policy for housing, culture, infrastructure and human service networks.

A number of focus groups and government organisations are investigating ways in which to meet changing community needs in the region through non-traditional service delivery models. The trend is toward community responsibility and provision, rather than government responsibility and provision, due to the remoteness and declining populations in the region, coupled with the use of improved telecommunications services.

The types of studies that are being conducted to determine community needs are also moving away from the provision of basic services to broader areas, for example, recreation, sports and technological education.

Access to Services

The Burnett Mary region is made up of mainly rural local government areas with a number of larger large service centres being (in order of population size) the cities of Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Gympie and Kingaroy. An increased demand for aged care services and accommodation, increased pressure on health agencies to provide additional and improved services and changing population and demographic trends have all impacted on the ability of agencies to plan future services and increased the cost of service delivery, particularly in rural areas.

There is a diversity of cultural groups with different service needs in the Burnett Mary region. In response to needs of these cultural groups, government agencies and services have implemented the Multicultural Queensland Policy, and in the case of local government and community groups, the development and implementation of a similar policy is encouraged. This entails professional development for staff, such as cross-cultural skills training, and ensuring that

interpreters are used when clients have difficulty communicating in English. Consultation with local cultural groups in the development of specific strategies to provide more accessible information and services should also be part of the response.

Potential Solutions to Issues

Community members are being called upon to respond to increasingly complex issues which can have a very real impact on their environment, economic viability and quality of life. In doing so they rely upon the six forms of capital available, in varying degrees, to all communities. These capitals are financial capital (the stock of savings, credit, and investments), physical capital (buildings, roads, equipment), environmental capital (including such things as soils, waterways, flora and fauna, and features of natural attraction), institutional capital (the forms and strength of governance, and structures of service delivery), human capital (the skills, abilities, education and training of individuals), and social capital (the social networks, relationships of trust, and shared values and visions of a community). It has been argued that while the development of human capital has, in the past, been targeted via education and training (especially leadership training), it is social capital that underpins successful community mobilisation in the pursuit of sustainable community development. It is also argued that - in an era of 'self help' and locally-based actions for improved community well-being - social capital is, for many communities, the 'scarce resource' among the six capitals (*Gray and Lawrence, 2001*).

As has been highlighted in this paper, the Burnett Mary Region is characterised by high levels of in-migration, relatively low levels of ethnic diversity, relatively low income and education levels, and a population older than the Queensland and Australian average. With an increasing focus on community-based solutions to issues, including natural resource management, much work needs to be done on raising the capacity of the population to a level where they can effectively take responsibility for devising and implementing strategies to address such issues. Potential approaches include:

- Facilitation and resourcing for capacity building within the region.
- Development of social capital through activities such as support for community events and festivals, and encouragement of on-ground projects that involve as many people as possible from diverse backgrounds. These activities have the potential to engender higher levels of trust and cooperation between individuals and groups, thereby enhancing the opportunity for collaboration in other areas.
- Improved communication networks which can reduce the transaction costs associated with information distribution, and lead to a greater level of involvement by community members.

Facilitation and Resourcing for Capacity Building

Successful communities are those which are proactive and which accept responsibility for their actions and futures, and there is an increasing expectation on the part of the government that this will happen. Governments need to provide appropriate support to assist in this regard (*Cavaye, 1997*). The financial costs of participation can be a deterrent to many community members who, because of their abilities and experience, could otherwise make a valuable

contribution to consultation processes. These costs can be incurred through travel expenses and through time taken away from work or business.

A wider range of people need to be encouraged to participate in consultation, planning and decision making, both to relieve the pressure on the 'chosen few' in the community, and also to obtain the best outcomes for all stakeholders. If community members are to continue to participate in consultation processes, consideration has to be given to the most appropriate methods of consultation, and community input needs to be respected and valued. There is increased potential for community 'burn out', due to over commitment or frustration with the ways in which community input is treated.

External assistance can be crucial to capacity building, but communities must request such assistance, be in control of goal setting, and be active in processes of change. Capacity building is not only desirable within regionally-based communities: it is viewed as being crucial to the ability of public service agencies, and of local businesses, to support sustainable development (*Dale and Bellamy, 1998; Dovers, 1999; Cavaye and Lawrence, 2000*). The use of technology may be one way in which this can be achieved.

Development of Social Capital

Social capital has been described as "...the internal social and cultural coherence of society, the norms and values that govern interactions among people, and the institutions in which they are embedded" (Serageldin cited in Collier 1998, p.iv). It therefore embodies the networks, trust and reciprocity that exist between individuals and/or groups within a community that allow people to come together to resolve common problems. Grafton and Knowles (2003) believe that the concept of trust has often been used as a proxy for social capital. Trust can be defined as the belief in the good intentions and expected behaviour of others. It arises from experience of other people's actions, as well as innate or socially determined views about other people or groups. Underlying the concept of trust and trustworthy behaviour are norms and sanctions associated with reciprocal behaviour, which reflect ethical views and cumulative interpersonal obligations and expectations.

Adler & Kwon (1999) identify the facilitation of access to information as one of the key benefits associated with high levels of social capital. Social interaction provides access to broader sources of information at lower cost, which improves information's quality, relevance and timeliness, and allows cost-effective searching for new information and transferring of complex information and tacit knowledge. This allows focal actors within networks to get things done and achieve their goals more efficiently. Collier (1998) believes that transmission of knowledge about the behaviour of others reduces the problem of opportunism, and reduces the problem of free riding. Sorensen (1998) agrees, and believes that social networks also improve coordination of action, which is of great importance for reducing opportunistic behaviour. He argues that such behaviour arises when individuals or groups develop a view that the potential costs of operating outside existing rules and regulations are outweighed by the benefits. Adler & Kwon (1999) point to social capital as the key to development of strong social norms and beliefs, which encourage compliance

with local rules and customs, and reduces the need for formal controls. In discussing the role of social capital in influencing behaviour, Rose (1998) argues that, although very important, formal rules play a relatively small role in shaping individual and group choices. Such choices are overwhelmingly defined by codes of conduct, norms of behaviour and conventions that are accepted within a societal group.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002) believe that aspects of social capital have benefits for the economy, particularly in terms of its potential to decrease transaction costs, and encourage cooperative behaviour and trust. Increased social interaction generates improved communication and dissemination of information about markets and new technologies, and reduces the instance of market failure due to lack of knowledge (Collier 1998).

There are however risks associated with high levels of particular types of social capital. Adler & Kwon (1999) warn that the amount of effort put in to maintaining highly integrated social networks may not always provide an effective return on investment. In addition, highly cohesive groups may reduce the flow of new ideas into the group, impeding entrepreneurship and resulting in parochialism and inertia. In many cases, strong solidarity can result in actors becoming over embedded in the relationship that exists within groups. Grafton & Knowles (2003) distinguish between bridging social capital that links across groups and aids information diffusion, and bonding social capital that helps to reinforce existing and more exclusive identities and groupings. In some circumstances, forms of bonding social capital have the potential to impede social cohesion, particularly when it is used to impose conformity and social division, or to exclude outsiders (ABS 2002).

Nevertheless, social capital is one of the keys to increased community capacity. The concept of capacity building should not be seen as referring to something to be 'done to' communities by external forces. This would fit into a 'top down' model of development where external goals are set and imposed on communities. In contrast, capacity building should refer to a facilitation process by which growth in social capital reaches levels of trust and cooperation that allow for productive community networks, and the ability to anticipate change and to make informed decisions.

Improved Access to Information Services

The emergence of community-based regional natural resource management groups can be traced to a discussion paper by the National Natural Resource Management Task Force (1999). It argues that a community-based regional approach offers a framework for planning and action for natural resource management, industry and community development that suits specific circumstances. It further argues that the regional scale is also the most suitable scale for negotiating trade-offs and resolving conflicts, and for determining priorities and shared investment arrangements where there is a need for coordinated action over a large area involving many people. This view is supported by the United Nations Agenda 21 program which argues that "...decentralization of decision-making towards local and community

organizations is the key to changing people's behaviour and implementing sustainable farming strategies." By providing a means of considering environmental, social and economic problems in an integrated way, undertaking community based natural resource management at the regional scale avoids the problems associated with centralised government programs, such as non-relevance to a particular area, while also providing a means of coordinating localised initiatives (eg. Landcare activities).

One of the most important elements of community-based natural resource management is the devolution of greater authority to and empowerment of regional communities, so that those to whom a greater share of the responsibility now falls (ie. the 'community'), are able to determine their preferred approaches to natural resource management. While the concept of 'community' is somewhat elusive, Selznick (1996, 195) offers the definition "... a group is a community to the extent that it encompasses a broad range of activities and interests, and to the extent that participation implicates whole persons rather than segmental interests or activities."

In order to prepare and implement natural resource strategies, access to information to assist in decision-making is vital. Young et al (1996, 107) feel that information supply is fundamentally important in changing attitudes and behaviours, and that the tendency to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour is increased through enlightened self-interest. Williams (1999) argues that while devolution of increased authority to regional and catchment communities for natural resource management is well developed in some states and appears to be a useful vehicle for change, it is essential that regional bodies have access to resources and information sufficient to their mandate.

It is often argued that local information systems which allow direct interaction between citizens and enterprises with administrators and politicians, provide new ways of increasing the efficiency of public services, the local economy and enhance democratic decision making (Liikanen 1999). Kingston (1998) argues that the traditional model of decision making often saw the interaction between government agencies and the public limited to the public right to know, informing the public and the public right to object. This model saw the knowledge, expertise and information held by authoritative decision makers, with the ability to define interests, the actors, determine the agenda, assess risks, recommend solutions and partake in the final decision traditionally closed to the public. Reassessment of this model due to shrinking agency budgets and questions regarding its effectiveness have led governments to encourage greater participation by the community in natural resource decision-making. It is now accepted that a more inclusive model, which encourages local ownership and commitment to appropriate strategies for dealing with natural resource management issues, is required.

The Regional Australia Summit Steering Committee (2000), in its report on sustainable natural resource management (Theme 12), argues that information needs to be made available and accessible for real-time decision-making." It proposed that responsibilities and resources be further devolved from Commonwealth and State government to regional organizations, and that the

decision-making process should be supported through communications and information exchange. Effective natural resource management requires a flexible information system capable of integrating and sharing data from a broad range of sources and handling large quantities of spatially related data across a range of scales. Walker *et al* (1998) argue that experience suggests that in order to enable effective community participation in natural resource planning, four fundamental requirements must be met:

- Effective access to information pertinent to resource use planning;
- Access to the analytical tools required to make effective use of that information;
- The capacity to make appropriate use of the analytical tools and data sets; and
- A legislative and institutional environment that fosters effective participation.

The National Natural Resource Management Task Force (1999) identified that the adoption of sustainable natural resource management practices is founded on knowledge and information. This knowledge and information supports informed decision-making and innovation, and expands understanding about what management practices and natural resource uses are sustainable. Bouilly (2000) notes that the way forward for natural resource management must be undertaken with technical expertise, good management and relevant research at the right scale, backed by coordination and planning based on a strong knowledge base. Ready access to data and information at the regional level is therefore essential in order to assist landholders and other community based natural resource managers in planning and implementing sustainable practices. It is therefore critical that relevant and affordable information for natural resource management be available at the regional level.

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